

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
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INFO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 02767

EO 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PORS, PINT, CW
SUBJECT: COOK ISLANDS ELECTION FRAUD INVESTIGATION

REF: WELLINGTON 01683

1. THREE WEEKS OF HEARINGS IN VARIOUS NEW ZEALAND CITIES ON PETITIONS ALLEGING BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION IN THE MARCH 30 COOK ISLANDS ELECTION HAVE JUST CONCLUDED. HEARD BY COOK ISLANDS CHIEF JUSTICE G. J. DONNE, THE 15 PETITIONS ALLEGE THAT SIR ALBERT HENRY AND CERTAIN COOK ISLANDS PARTY (CIP) CANDIDATES WERE GUILTY OF BRIBERY IN ARRANGING SUBSIDIZED CHARTER FLIGHTS OF VOTERS FROM AUCKLAND TO RAROTONGA, THE COOK ISLANDS CAPITAL, AND MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN PAYING COOK ISLANDS GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIP. WITNESSES IN THE NEW ZEALAND HEARINGS TESTIFIED THAT THERE WAS CAREFUL SCREENING OF APPLICANTS FOR THE FLIGHTS TO ASSURE THAT ONLY CIP SUPPORTERS WERE FLOWN TO RAROTONGA AND SUBPOENAS HAVE PRODUCED EVIDENCE OF THE LAUNDERING THROUGH VARIOUS ACCOUNTS OF SOME NZ\$329,000 WHICH WAS FINALLY PAID TO ANSETT AIRLINES FOR THE VOTER SHUTTLE FLIGHTS. THE EVIDENCE POINTED TOWARD THE COOK ISLANDS PHILATELIC BUREAU,
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OWNED BY NEW YORKER FINBAR KINNEY, AS THE SOURCE OF MOST OF THE MONEY. WITH THE NEW ZEALAND HEARINGS NOW COMPLETED, THE SCENE SHIFTS TO RAROTONGA ON JUNE 6 FOR THE TAKING OF EVIDENCE ON THE MISUSE OF FUNDS ALLEGATIONS.

2. IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW FOLLOWING THE ELECTION,

SIR ALBERT ADMITTED ASKING KINNEY "AS A FRIEND" TO HELP HIM PERSONALLY TO THE TUNE OF \$180,000. SIR ALBERT, HOWEVER, DENIED THAT KINNEY CONTRIBUTED DIRECTLY TO THE CIP. IN THE NEW ZEALAND HEARINGS, COUNSEL FOR THE CIP CLAIMED THAT THE AMOUNTS RECEIVED FROM KINNEY'S PHILATELIC BUREAU WERE ADVANCES AGAINST ANTICIPATED PROFITS.

3. CONGEN AUCKLAND WAS APPROACHED MAY 24 BY COOK ISLANDS SUPT. OF POLICE M. E. KAHN REQUESTING USG ASSISTANCE IN DETERMINING A) WHETHER THERE ARE ANY RESTRICTIONS IN US LAW ON US CITIZENS MAKING POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO FOREIGN POLITICAL PARTIES OR GOVERNMENTS, AND B) WHETHER SIR ALBERT MEETS WITH KINNEY DURING A TRIP TO HONOLULU WHICH SIR ALBERT IS PLANNING IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE COMPANY OF A CULTURAL GROUP. DEPARTMENT PLEASE ADVISE. HEALY

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